

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ZAGREB 00257 011043Z

16

ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 DOTE-00 L-02 PM-03 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 /057 W

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O R 010925Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL ZAGREB

TO W.E. BECKER, GENERAL SERVICE MANAGER IMMEDIATE

ELECTRO-MOTIVE DIVISION, GENERAL MOTORS

9301 WEST 55TH STREET

LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS

TELEX 910-6912186

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3022

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

UNCLAS ZAGREB 0257

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN, YO

SUBJECT: ZAGREB TRAIN WRECK

1. ON MARCH 31 REPRESENTATIVE OF CONSULATE GENERAL GAVE COVIC
DIAGRAM OF THE BRAKING SYSTEM PROVIDED IN YOUR LETTER OF
MARCH 24.

2. COVIC EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR YOUR PROMPT ACTION AND AT
SAME TIME INFORMED US ABOUT POSSIBLE TECHNICAL PROBLEM WHICH
COULD CAUSE TEMPORARY FAILURE IN BRAKING SYSTEM ON GM LOCOMOTIVES
OF TYPE INVOLVED IN ZAGREB TRAIN WRECK. ACCORDING TO COVIC, IF
ASSISTANT DRIVER PLACES HIS BRAKING CONTROLS IN POSITION "ONE,"
WHICH COVIC CALLED "PREPARATION FOR BRAKING," THE BRAKING CONTROLS
OF THE ENGINEER BECOME INOPERATIVE ON ALL POSITIONS EXCEPT
"EMERGENCY BRAKING." COVIC STATED THAT HE HAD TESTED LOCOMOTIVE
INVOLVED IN WRECK AND FIVE OTHERS, INCLUDING NEWEST IN POSSESSION
OF THE YUGOSLAV STATE RAILWAYS, AND FOUND ALL LOCOMOTIVES TO HAVE
THIS PROBLEM.

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3. COVIC STATED THAT HIS TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION HAS SHOWN

THAT ABOVE PROBLEM WAS NOT A FACTOR IN THE ZAGREB TRAIN WRECK WHICH KILLED MORE THAN 150 PERSONS. HE BELIEVES HE HAS ENOUGH PROOF TO REBUT ANY DEFENSE ATTEMPTS TO CLAIM MECHANICAL FAILURE AS CAUSE OF WRECK. IT IS, NATURALLY, IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT DEFINITELY THE COURSE OF THE TRIAL. THE ZAGREB PRESS THIS MORNING HAS AN ARTICLE WHICH RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LOCOMOTIVE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN IN ORDER. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, GM MAY WISH TO SEND TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE TO ZAGREB, IF ONE IS AVAILABLE IN EUROPE. COVIC BELIEVES TRIAL MIGHT CONCLUDE BY THURSDAY, APRIL 3.
KAISER

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